

The Commonweal

December 8, 1950

Red Smear in California

HARRY W. FLANNERY

Michigan Photo-Finish

JOHN A. LYNCH

We Genteel Assassins

LEO J. TRESE

Who Won the Elections?

JOHN C. CORT

Volume LIII

15c

Number 9

Christmas In Three Weeks

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Published weekly, printed and copyrighted, 1950, in the U. S. A., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U. S. and Canada, \$7 a year; Foreign \$8. Single copies, 15c.

The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Restive Europe

THERE are moments like the present one when the effort seems hardly worth the candle. In terms of tangible results in Europe, in terms of lives and dollars, American goods and know-how appear to have been expended in vain. After five arduous years much of what we set out to do in Europe has not come to be. Western Europe has not achieved sufficient economic unity despite billions in American aid. Politically the major powers are still leagues apart. They have not even been able to agree on how an integrated European military force can be planned for the future.

A sizable bloc of British Laborites want a revision of foreign policy in the direction of seeking general talks with Soviet Russia; these men also want to cut British armament expenditures by half. The French oppose German rearmament unless the Germans are made part of an autonomous European military force. German Socialists in Bavaria and elsewhere have won at the polls by opposing the rearmament of Germany unless full sovereignty and enough foreign troops to hold the Elbe River line go with it.

In short, at a most critical time, the long and painful effort to put Western Europe on her own feet appears doomed to failure. To some observers the prospect is so gloomy that they would, with David Lawrence, use our billions "to build up our own Army, Navy and Air Force and . . . be done with European vacillation and 'left wing' softness."

Others in their impatience, instead of having us withdraw to our supposed, water-bound fastness, would take the offensive against Russia while we still have marked atomic superiority. They would have us take on Russia in the Far East or anywhere. They demand a showdown.

These are natural human reactions and they were reflected in our recent voting. One of them

assumes that we can let the rest of the world go hang without danger to our own existence; the other that there is only one way of dealing with a nation that is an avowed enemy, no matter what its location and resources.

Actually there is no preponderant evidence that our European policy has failed. It has kept the Russians out thus far. The Kremlin still looks with a covetous eye on the heavy-industry concentrations in Britain, the Ruhr, Belgium and Northern France. Meanwhile the countries of Western Europe continue to grow stronger, individually and even collectively.

In Western Germany production is already a third greater than it was before the war. France boasts a trade surplus, even though it is accounted for largely by raw materials. Britain's visible exports now balance her imports, with her shipping, tourism and other invisible exports piling up a nice trade balance for the first time since the war.

The insistence with which each of these nations proposes its own ideas for European Union and mutual defense is a sign of a certain national strength and self-confidence. Only in the event that those ideas which would weaken the European fabric are persisted in regardless of the common danger, can it be said that Europe shows signs of having fatal soft spots.

EUROPE is not lost, much as it is endangered by the present objectives of some doctrinaire Socialists. Slow progress toward unity and collective strength continues to be made. Meanwhile Soviet Russia confines herself to "attacking only the feeble" for fear of the atom bomb, lack of oil and disaffection among the satellites of Eastern Europe.

The main lines of our European policy hold good. We should pursue it with patience, persistence and determination.

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• NEXT WEEK •

To compare William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway, writes FRANCIS DOWNING, would be like trying to determine whether El Greco or Gauguin were the greater painter: there are not enough common elements present.

"Hemingway has reduced the art of emotional conveyance to its simplest; Faulkner has restored eloquence, rhetoric, if you will, to American prose. I would even be willing to defend the proposition that none of our fiction has been so drenched in Catholicism as Hemingway's; Faulkner by comparison is authentic American Protestantism."

WHEN it was the Germans rather than the Russians, Hitler rather than Stalin, attention was focused on the Jews, mainly because they were the first to receive the full fury of the Nazi evil. Then, in those days before the war, it was sometimes hard to get people over here perturbed, especially if they were infected with anti-Semitism and felt that there was no reason to get involved in what was specifically a Jewish cause.

There were many insistent, non-Jewish voices at the time quoting John Donne and saying that a Jew is a man and that is what matters. But the voices often fell on deaf ears. If a man is a Catholic he'll never forget the shame of hearing *Social Justice* hawked outside the churches while Hitler was marching millions of Jews off to the furnaces; and if a man is a Jew, he'll probably never forget the sense of frustration he had in being made to feel that what he said was suspect, dismissed with, "Of course he's a Jew and that *does* make a difference"—as if Hitler were some special Jewish plague that the rest of the world might escape and it was only out of the goodness of their hearts that other people were concerned, having nothing to lose themselves one way or the other.

Later other elements were added. After Pearl Harbor it was the United States *vs.* the Third Reich, Americans *vs.* Germans, our way of life *vs.* theirs. Now it was only the rare GI who still thought about himself as being involved in a specifically Jewish cause or saw himself as an unwilling defender of Jewish interests. And that, of course, is the way it should have been from the beginning, for it should have been evident that the Jews were only the first on Hitler's list.

Now the Catholics, in the Communist attack on man, have been in somewhat the same role as the Jews once held. Instead of the newspapers telling about the hunting-down of Jews, they have reported the arrest of monks and nuns, bishops and priests. The first fury of Communism was turned against clergymen and lay Catholic leaders. So for awhile it seemed that theirs was specifically an attack on the Catholic Church. And again it was hard to convince some people for whom the bell was tolling. Those who didn't like the Catholic Church, like those who didn't like the Jews, were inclined to close their ears and their hearts. During the Stepinatz condemnation four years ago and as late as the Mindszenty trial, there were important people still looking for excuses, clutching at vicious ru-

mors about the two clerics, warning the American people to take it easy and not get too excited about these matters, there are always two sides.

Sometimes if one were reading the liberal press, he might have concluded that the United States had more to fear from the Catholic hierarchy than from the Soviet high command. The prejudiced, the obsessed mind (as in the case of the anti-Semitic mind earlier) was capable of turning the victim into the aggressor, of reversing the roles so that the persecuted became the villains of the piece.

For a long time the Catholic was in the position the Jew was once forced into. He was made to feel that he alone stood to lose from the Communist offensive. And, unfortunately, in the face of this, Catholics didn't always keep their balance. In many cases they became victims of their own feeling of isolation; they suffered—and they allowed the wisdom their faith might have given them to suffer—from their own obsessions. The Catholic's obsession with Communism has often blinded him, causing him to act fatuously and irresponsibly, driving him to rhetoric when reason was called for, to near-hysteria when leadership was demanded, to confusion when above all the need was for clarity.

The situation has been cannily understood by demagogues and hysteria-mongers, to such a degree that Catholic awareness of the Communist evil has more often been exploited for personal gain than used as the basis for solid achievement.

More and more, the idea that the Communist march is something peculiarly affecting Catholics rather than all free men (as evidenced, to cite but one small example, by publishers' placing straight secular anti-Communist literature on their special "Catholic Books" listings) is, by the force of events, disappearing. It becomes ever more clear that all Americans, Catholic and non-Catholic, will have to stand together, without prejudice or hysteria, if we are to survive.

Catching Up with History

THERE has been a miserable contrast between France's love of *liberté*, in the style of 1789, and the French Assembly's concern with 'maintaining a position' in Indo-China. The contrast, and the preoccupation with something that went down the historical drain quite a while ago, has come very close to losing Indo-China.

Jean Letourneau, France's Minister for the Associated States, has now made a courageous speech in the French Assembly saying that France

will not abandon Indo-China, and will not turn the problem over to the UN. France, he said, will send 25,000 more military specialists to reinforce the 150,000-man army already there. A total of one half of the French fleet will engage in the Indo-Chinese campaign. The native army will be built up so that, in time, it will be able to take over the responsibility for internal peace and order (as it has already done in 3 provinces). And the agreements signed last year establishing a relationship of independence within the French Union for the three Indo-Chinese states will be interpreted "even more in their spirit than in their letter." Five months of negotiations at Pau, France, ended November 27 with Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos acquiring control of their own economies and currencies. By the first of January virtually the entire administrative apparatus of the states will be in Indo-Chinese hands.

Letourneau's speech was the first real affirmation of French policy in Indo-China since the signing of the French Union agreement. It was received without enthusiasm by the Assembly and "approval" was voted. Letourneau had hoped for a strong vote of confidence.

The major military operations remain the problem of the French. The reinforcements will further an entire reorganization of the campaign. It is no longer a matter of suppressing rebels, with the Geste brothers at fortress ramparts. Ho Chi Minh's rebels, with Chinese backing, are now conducting a fierce conventional military operation and the battles approach the scale of those in Korea, and so far they are being won by the rebels.

The French concessions were granted under considerable American pressure. Now the fundamentals of a program for recapturing the support of the Indo-Chinese people have been established by the French. The size of American aid has not been revealed but it is said to be in the region of a third of a billion dollars. It is to be spent on a 200,000-man national army controlled by Bao Dai's government, and on equipping the French.

Military successes are primary in terms of the time left; political success in rallying nationalist support (now largely behind the rebels) is primary if the West expects any military successes to be permanent.

We can hardly employ colonial methods to keep the Indo-Chinese free, but that is what the French tried, what they have only now abandoned. The West, acting in concert, has done little to find a better way. One hopes it is not too late.

Prescription for the Democrats

EVERYONE admits that the Republicans will be sitting pretty when the new Congress opens in January. Since they lack a majority in either chamber, they cannot be held responsible for Congressional misdeeds. Yet, in alliance with conservative Southern Democrats, they can call the turn on legislation.

Jim Farley thinks there is a way of breaking up the latter combination. As he recently told the Florida Chamber of Commerce, he would have Mr. Truman give up his battle for nationwide civil rights. Instead of pressing for federal legislation, the President would leave the matter of rights for the Negro to regional and state action. For the problem is now "gradually and peacefully being solved right here in the South." As evidence Mr. Farley cites greater job opportunities, a spreading of the right to vote and the reduction of lynching in the Southern states.

All this would seem to overlook the fact that progress in the civil rights direction, North and South, can be traced directly to the effects of popular agitation and to the demand for civil rights standards for our whole democracy. It also assumes that the Negro question is the only one that divides many Northern and Southern Democrats. There are, of course, certain Southern "liberals" who are with the President except on civil rights. But, with the narrow Democratic majority in both the new House and Senate, there will be more than enough conservative Southerners to vote with the Republicans to carry the day against the President on other measures—whatever Mr. Truman does about civil rights. Mr. Farley's Florida suggestion has not even the element of expediency to commend it.

Huffing and Puffing

HERE, in part, is the word the New York *Daily News* had for us on Thanksgiving morning: "Have fun while you may," a *News* editorial said, "because this looks like the last reasonably comfortable Thanksgiving Day Americans will experience for quite a while . . . the signs point now to either a long war in Korea or a bigger war. . . . Nobody knows what miseries Fate and our present rulers may bring down upon us tomorrow or next year." Heavy as these words are with all the tragic emotion of a small boy kicking the wall in a fit of anger, they have at least something in common with the gloomy, if

quieter, uneasiness that appears to be in most minds today.

The feeling largely derives from the fact that the West finds itself at the moment with almost all its non-atomic military power decoyed and pinned down in Asia, while some Europeans continue to indulge in a somewhat languorous attitude of watchful waiting. Europe, so the Acheson-Kennan policy of building "situations of strength" dictated, was to have been the hard core of the Western defense against Soviet imperialism, but instead we are busy now in Asia, and no doubt much to the satisfaction of the Russians.

In the circumstances it would seem the wise thing, especially in our present state of unpreparedness, to finish our business in Korea at the first honorable opportunity to negotiate a settlement guaranteeing the safety of the Chinese border. But were the Administration to try to reach such a settlement, either in the UN or elsewhere, there might well be cries of appeasement from the McCarthy-Knowland Republicans and, of course, more cries for Secretary Acheson's head. So the military men keep right on marching.

As General MacArthur engages more and more of the Chinese Communist army, we become emotionally and intellectually hardened and committed to nothing much but force in Asia, an attitude which can only lead to war with China and eventually with Russia. And to make matters worse, we might well be taking on Asia's millions virtually by ourselves, because some of our European allies have little or no sympathy for our impulsive handling of revolutionary Asia, where we have done more with guns than with butter. In a near-frenzy of force and emotionalism, we shall have swept aside what hopes there were to confront the Soviets in a few years with a situation of strength in either Europe or Asia, the only situation in which an armed truce or, failing that, an effective defense could be set up. We shall, in short, have lost our objective in the so-called cold war.

We have, it would seem, only a limited number of chances to avoid the very worst possibilities before us, and those chances depend now, in large part, upon our capacity to think and to act reasonably and carefully, to work our way between the twin disasters of appeasement and swaggering emotionalism. To be sure, it is not a time to listen to the small boys among us who already kick the wall. It is indeed something of a pity that there is so little time to grow up, so little time to advance in age and wisdom.

Red Smear in California

If to be a Democrat is to be a Communist,
then what we need are more *think* signs.

By HARRY W. FLANNERY

NO SINGLE reason explains what happened to the Democrats last November 7th. But so far as I have been able to determine, the main factor working against them was the Red smear—applied thick and constant.

I can speak with some experience on the Red smear because I live in California where any peculiarity of the moment vegetates with tropical luxuriousness. Also, I am a Catholic who believes in and tries to get some action on the principles set down in the Papal encyclicals. I don't say this braggingly, for I'm afraid I haven't much to brag about so far as results are concerned. I mention these beliefs and activities only because they have led, in the atmosphere of the last year, to my being suspect. My insistence that Francisco Franco heads a totalitarian government and my support of the United World Federalists, and even of the United Nations, have alarmed some sincere Catholic minds. The climax came when I began to make talks for Helen Gahagan Douglas; people called the house, asked me or my wife if it was true I was for her, expressed sorrow, and hung up.

Letters began to come in. "Every time Helen Gahagan Douglas has voted, it has been following the Communist line," said one. "I have watched every time since she has been in Washington to see how she has voted and have been appalled and frightened. When I heard that you had spoken for her, at the Christines meeting, I was aghast. It is certainly bewildering to find a Catholic for her. It is also most depressing."

I don't blame the people who called and wrote me, and who voted against Mrs. Douglas. They were sincere. They believed she had at least played footsie with the Communists. In these days, when Soviet Russia is threatening us with war, when men are dying in Korea because of Communist plotting, this is no time to encourage anyone who is not an obvious out-and-out battler against Communism. Why, it was said, she had voted against the appropriations for the Un-

American Activities Committee, she had voted against the McCarran Anti-Communist Bill, against contempt citations for the Hollywood Ten; the newspaper ads and stories showed she had voted hundreds of times for the very same measures as Vito Marcantonio. And against her was a handsome, curly-headed young man who looked so fatherly in pictures with his family, who had been a member of the Un-American Activities Committee, whose name had been on the anti-Communist bill, and whose billboards, to be seen all over the state, told you he was "On Guard for America."

★

IT'S easy to blame California's newspapers and Richard Nixon's political strategists for what happened to Helen. They did the smearing, and did it in such a lurid fashion that the people were roundly frightened about voting for Mrs. Douglas. But it seems to me some people in Washington were the ones who stuck out Helen's and some other necks to be smeared. In other words, I think President Truman made a mistake with that red herring remark, and the Administration erred in each successive step as pink skeletons were discovered in the Democratic closets. I suggested at the time, in my column in *Daily Variety*, that the President should not have ad-libbed that red-herring line, but followed a script written something like this: "We have always been determined and we shall now be doubly determined that Communists not be a part of our Government. We have had commissions, headed by Republicans, as it happened, who have been most carefully trying to keep them out, but it is apparent that some have sneaked through despite our vigilance. I shall ask the Congress to do what it can to aid us ferret out any who might remain. We know what Communism is. We realize it seeks to overthrow this form of Government of ours, this system which seeks to protect the inalienable rights, freedoms and opportunities of each individual man."

Instead of taking such a position, the Administration permitted the McCarthys and some other amateur, politically motivated operators to make it appear that the Democrats and the Commies were in the same line-up, that the Democrats were shielding the Reds. Now the ball was

HARRY W. FLANNERY, former foreign correspondent and the author of *Assignment to Berlin*, was active in the Democratic campaign this fall in California.

in the hands of the McCarthy eleven; Mrs. Douglas and others, like Tydings, were on the defensive.

★

THE defensive is no place to be—in war, politics or anything else. It's bad enough when the newspapers give all the headlines to the charges against your candidate and mention her only as the subject of attack; when the opposition has billboards on all the main highways and in every city, while your candidate can afford only a score in one of the largest states in the nation; when time on television and radio and space in newspapers is weighted by finances against you. But it's worse when you are put in the position of having to spend what time and money you have in trying to explain.

Mrs. Douglas was vulnerable, politically. Women are said to reach decisions more with their feelings than their reason. I don't know whether this is true or not, but I do know that Mrs. Douglas had decided opinions, and was not politically expedient. Once she arrived at a decision, she clung to it tenaciously, and defended it with a burst of flaming words.

Mrs. Douglas voted against the Un-American Activities Committee appropriation because she believed the committee was not being just and could not be so long as it permitted unscrupulous politicians to use it as a means of gaining publicity, of pillorying persons without giving them an opportunity to defend themselves by submitting their case, facing their accusers and using cross-examination. She voted against the McCarran Bill because it was a bad bill. Other members of Congress told me they, too, knew it was a bad bill, but they also realized the people were excited about Communism, the public considered the measure anti-Communist, and under the circumstances, the only thing to do was to vote for it. But not Helen. She voted against it when it first came up and to support the President's veto.

Also, she did not vote contempt against the Hollywood Ten. She had voted to cite Gerhard Eisler and Leon Josephson, because they refused to answer a subpoena or be sworn. That was contempt. But the Hollywood group had appeared before Congress. They wanted to answer the question in their own words. Said Mrs. Douglas: "The investigations, under the direction of J. Parnell Thomas, recently paroled from jail where he was serving sentence for a criminal offense, were roundly condemned by responsible authorities who feared the irresponsible smear tactics of Thomas' committee would do great harm to the film industry. . . . The tragic farce of the Hollywood investigations was playing into the hands of the Communists."

As for voting with Marcantonio, that was

true, generally speaking — on domestic issues. Marcantonio voted for slum clearance, for middle class housing, to increase and expand social security, to increase the minimum wage, for FEPC, against the Wood bill, and for countless other New Deal and Fair Deal measures. That did not make these projects wrong; it was the tactics decided upon for the party line. On foreign affairs—which the Nixon supporters did not mention, and on which the major directives come from Moscow—Marcantonio voted with Nixon against aid to Korea, to reduce Marshall Plan funds, against extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, to cut Atlantic Pact funds in half, and to reduce aid to China.

"This does not make Mr. Nixon a Communist," Mrs. Douglas said in all fairness, a strange note in the campaign. "It only proves that he and Mr. Marcantonio and the majority in the Republican Party see eye to eye in voting against measures of vital importance to our program to stem the tide of Communist aggression around the world."

This was all very good—so far as it could go. I happen to agree with Mrs. Douglas that principle is important. I also believe the only way to fight Communism is to improve our domestic system and make it proof against the Red termites, and that we have to help anti-Communists abroad get on their feet. Generally speaking, I think we did what appeared to be the wiser thing at the time, in our foreign policy. I disagreed with Helen Douglas when she voted against the Truman Doctrine in Greece and Turkey; she was acting again on principle, insisting that any action taken must be through the United Nations. I have disagreed since 1945 on our policy in China, which Mrs. Douglas has valiantly supported throughout. The Republicans, on the other hand, came up with nothing but ex-post-facto wisdom. Generally speaking, she represented my ideas, and Nixon certainly did not.

But no answer, under the best of circumstances, ever catches up with the charge, especially if you do not have sufficient means to reply. However, even if she were able to buy needed billboards, radio, television and newspaper space, being on the defensive is a grave disadvantage. When you're answering charges from the platform, over the phone, in columns or over the radio, you're not moving toward your goal. Generally, too, under the avalanche of attack, you do no more than go down before the charge of those who rush upon you shouting "Red."

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MRS. DOUGLAS fought back hard. She can pound the rostrum, clench her fist, and cry out her message with the kind of vehemence that could be faced personally only by an opponent

of extreme courage and invincible calm. But Mrs. Douglas was too often talking to those who were already for her and she could not reach enough of the other kind. Good advertisements, trying to answer the charges, were run by the AFL Voters League and others, but these were not even seen or were apparently ineffectual against those who had been affected by constant headlines. Since California has no Democratic organization and almost no precinct workers, many persons were not reached at all. Mrs. Douglas had a

broom trying to sweep back the sea.

This may be only an incident, since the losses were by no means so great as in 1946. However if it continues to be true, as it was this summer and fall in California, that to be a Democrat is to be a Communist, and if Catholic social and international principles, as represented by some Democrats, among others, are to have even rougher going, the November elections must be viewed as having frightening, or at least worrisome, aspects.

Michigan Photo-Finish

A report on the election
confusion in that state.

By JOHN A. LYNCH

IN A last-minute ad paid for by Republicans, Michigan's Democratic Governor, G. Mennen Williams, candidate for re-election, was pictured bound and gagged astride a stubborn donkey labeled ADA, with Walter Reuther of the CIO pulling at the reins. Pictured also was former governor, Harry F. Kelly, the Republican hope, riding a convertible automobile toward a peaceful city upon which the sun ever shines, all of which was labeled "Prosperity."

When the election was over, things seemed to have come out just about the way the ad pictured. Harry Kelly had won, and for the press he said: "We will sit down three weeks from now to organize our team." The press responded by patting Mr. Kelly on the back, and congratulating themselves that everything had come out as they had hoped and predicted, even though it had been a little close. With all but one of Michigan's 4,361 precincts reporting, Kelly's margin had been a slim 5,395 votes—later revised to 6,108—out of 1,853,676 votes cast. Even so, someone mentioned that it was a "mandate of the people." Then Mr. Kelly gathered in his wife and his daughter and headed south for a three weeks rest in Florida.

Governor Williams, the defeated candidate, though unwilling to concede so narrow a defeat, quietly slipped off to a Mt. Clemens, Michigan hotel, just outside Detroit, to take his rest. It

had been a tough campaign. If the Republicans had been for anything at all it was prosperity, but this had taken a back seat to the idea that Williams must be got rid of. Probably every other lapel in Michigan had carried the slogan: "Stop Confusion; Go Republican."

Then something happened. Within hours after the election was supposedly cut and dried, while Harry Kelly's happy smile still beamed from the front pages of metropolitan newspapers, the news was out that something was amiss; corrections began to come in. Twenty-nine heavily Democratic Detroit precincts, it seemed, had counted only their split tickets, had forgotten to count their straight tickets. Williams picked up 5,634 votes, Kelly 2,441.

In Genesee County (Flint), also Democratic, "complete" returns had actually lacked four precincts. Kelly picked up a few, but Williams beat him by 700.

A phone call from Oakland County's Southfield Township had been misunderstood and Williams had lost an even 500 votes in the transmission.

In Macomb County (Mt. Clemens), the vote was suddenly switched because of what was called an "obvious" error. Instead of giving the gubernatorial candidates their rightful votes, one election board had given Kelly the "yes" votes for yellow oleomargarine, an issue that passed handily, and Williams had been relegated the "no" votes. The corrections made, Williams shot up from 209 to 707 and Kelly fell down from 504 to 221.

Within a week's time, as the unofficial vote underwent an "official" canvass, 62 of Michigan's 83 counties reported errors.

JOHN A. LYNCH is a short-story writer who lives in Birmingham, Michigan.

The headlines pretty well tell the story:

"Kelly Takes Victory in Stride"

"Kelly Hangs on—Edge Now 1,279"

"Kelly's Lead Now 307"

"Williams Ahead"

"Kelly Leads Again"

"Williams Leads Again by 558"

"Williams Has 1,406 Edge"

And finally:

"Williams is Winner by Margin of 1,152."

The final count was 935,152 for Williams, 934,000 for Kelly, the closest gubernatorial race in Michigan history, and the beginning of a state-wide confusion that may not quiet down for months.

★

IF REPUBLICAN Harry F. Kelly was dismayed, the people of Michigan were more so. The three major Detroit newspapers, who had been so ready to welcome Kelly and who now found themselves suddenly reversed, began to write of the "apparent" victory of Williams. They spoke of the election as a "Comedy of Errors." But the man in the street didn't think it was very funny, nor was he sure it was anyone's victory. The word "fraud" began to creep into Democratic conversations. What's the sense of voting, several said, if you don't know where your vote is going. Some Republicans countered by saying it all looked like a Democratic trick. Since Governor Williams had all along refused to concede defeat, he probably knew what was going to happen. Then emphasis began to shift from the call letters of the CIO and ADA and the GOP, and even from Williams and Kelly, to the election workers who had been responsible for the whole business.

To offset too much criticism, the newspapers began to explain things by speaking of "honest mistakes." There was a lack of voting machines for one thing. Detroit, for instance, had machines in only 146 of its 1,419 precincts. Election supervisors became harried apologists for their workers, many of whom, they said, were housewives who did this kind of work only two days out of a year. Men and women had to work sixteen hours at a stretch, and it was too much to expect of them that they could count accurately. They had to work in cold hallways and crowded buildings and there wasn't enough money in it anyway.

It made a nice scandal. Wayne County (Detroit), where the election had probably really been decided, came under fire from heavily Republican upstate districts who were angry at having the already-won election taken away from them by the big city. Wayne County, out of 728,968 votes cast, had given Williams a final plural-

ity of 167,524. But the Democrats were quick to point out the mismanagement of many upstate election boards. Directly contrary to Michigan law, boards in many Republican districts were staffed entirely by Republicans, whereas the law required that no party could be in the majority, that in a two party election, which this mainly was, the staffs had to be split evenly.

★

THEN there was the item that in Plymouth Township, at the edge of Wayne County, where Kelly polled 554 votes to Williams' 272, none of the voters had been required to sign ballot applications before voting. And in another ward of Detroit, 404 people had voted, but only 99 ballots for governor could be found.

Meanwhile Democratic and Republican party leaders were hard at work on the next steps. The newspapers which had spoken as if Williams would be niggardly to call for a recount, were now demanding that Kelly do just that. Kelly, called back from his Florida vacation, said that he would. A state-wide recount, at five dollars a precinct, would cost the Republicans \$21,805. The Democrats said that they would be ready to call for a recount of any precincts the Republicans didn't want to look into, presumably Detroit precincts. Members of both parties began to cull legal counselors and vote watchers and to dig down for funds. The State itself was faced with costs of from \$150,000 to \$200,000 in order to make a recount.

The recount itself is expected to take from three to eight weeks.

Williams will be sworn in if the recount has not been completed by January 1st. Whether he will stay governor is another matter.

Public opinion seems to favor the idea that Williams is in, recount or no. Williams has been a personality hard to beat, and it was only the Republican drift in this off-year election that made his margin as close as it was. When we consider how the rest of the state voting went in Michigan — heavily Republican — Williams emerges as some sort of Democratic golden boy. Williams, and Williams alone, bow-tie, boyish smile and easily met, overcame this Republican majority. It is doubtful that the ADA and the CIO helped him a great deal, when they couldn't save the other Democratic candidates by even a near margin.

Michigan waits then. The Democrats and the Republicans go about raising their money. The newspapers have dropped the case entirely or hidden the pros and cons on an inside page, irked, perhaps, that Williams could have done this to them. The man in the street, however, still suspicious, no matter what his party, would some day like to get to the real bottom of it all.

Voice of the Simple

WALKING recently in the crowded streets of London, an American expressed regret that he could not stay longer in England and learn something of the people at large; for, as he observed, to know their reactions to socialism, their recreations, how they run an election, their divorce statistics and their attitude to foreigners is, "under the aspect of eternity," all rather superficial. To which I replied, platitudinously, that time is not enough; that it is possible to live a life-time in a country and yet learn no more about the inner life of its people than can be gathered from one's own immediate circle and surroundings.

That exchange suggests to me that I should set down a few sidelights, "human flashes," on my fellow countrymen and countrywomen: confining them, since the field is so huge and the material commensurate, to one part of society and one or two facets of experience or mood.

Some years ago, in a rather remote part of the country, the wife of a farm-laborer was put on trial on a charge of murdering her husband. She was found guilty and sentenced to death. As the time of execution drew near, she sent for her lawyer. She then gave him a plea she had written, and asked him to convey it to the king.

Mighty King, have pity on your lowly afflicted subject. Do not let them kill me on Wednesday. Ask them to give A . . . B . . . an opportunity of saying what will prove my innocence. From the brink of the cold dark grave I am a poor helpless woman. I ask you not to let them kill me. I am innocent.

It would seem shameful to make any comment; but there is one thing I want to say. There are perhaps some Americans who, reading that, might overlook its high tragedy (in the unspoiled meaning of that abused word) and find in the first sentence a confirmation of their belief that the English grovel before their "kings and lords." That is laughably wrong; ordinarily, the Englishman's attitude to the King's Most Excellent Majesty is more familiar than that of an American to his Flag. But in that moving document we hear a simple woman unconsciously expressing, in her agony, an attitude to kingship and sovereign power that received its death-blow when King Charles I's head was struck off on the scaffold 302 years ago.

From one sort of death to another, that of a hunch-backed fisher-boy, told in the Devon dialect, which I surely need not translate.

He was in to house one mornin', an' I though 'e was sleepin,' an' I said, "Freddie, will 'ee 'have a cup o' tay, you'm been sleepin'", an' 'e says, "No, I 'aven't, but I been sort o' dreamin,'" an' 'e said

as 'e'd see'd a green valley wi' a stream o' water like runnin down the centre o' it, an' 'e thought 'e see'd granfer there (that we losted jest before 'en). 'E sat on's mother's lap, an' 'e jest died suddint like, went away. . . .

"'E said as 'e'd see'd a green valley." That strikes a chord, doesn't it? "'A babbled of green fields." I dare swear Shakespeare was not read in that cottage: but he was none the less a forebear of that dying fisher-lad, as he is of all who speak English from the North Atlantic to the Pacific.

An example of the same sort of thing. In a small village of the south midlands lived an old artisan, a devout Protestant. When the sound of the midday angelus was carried on the wind from a Catholic chapel in the next village he would take off his hat; and after a moment's silence murmur, "In my Father's house are many mansions." Not Shakespeare this time: but Sir Thomas Browne. He wrote about 1635 (in *Religio Medici*): "At the sight of a Cross or Crucifix I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour. . . . I could never hear the Ave-Mary bell without an elevation. . . ."

These are particular examples of that continuing identity throughout the centuries that David Jones saw in a unit mixed of Londoners and Welshmen on the Western front in 1915-16. He noted in that fine book *In Parenthesis*: "Together they bore in their bodies the genuine tradition of the Island of Britain, from Bendigeidfran to Jingle and Marie Lloyd. These were the children of Doll Tearsheet. Those are before Caractacus was."

★

TALKING of war and therefore of courage, Stephen Reynolds in his *Letters* (who there records the death of Freddie mentioned above) quotes a naval petty-officer who said, "When a man tells me he's never afraid any-when, I tells him to his face he's a bloody liar." That ties up with the sergeant-major who, when it was suggested in the midst of a bombardment that he was frightened, retorted, "If you were as frightened as I am, my lad, you'd have run away an hour ago."

There is a moment in the film *Morning Departure* that sums up in five words not only a characteristic English attitude in face of doom, but in a way the whole English character at its best. When lots are to be drawn with playing-cards for use of the insufficient escape-gear, a seaman quietly asks his officer, "Ace high or low, sir?"

But don't let us take ourselves too seriously. Turn up a soldiers' song of the first world war.

I want to go home,

I want to go home.

The coal-box and shrapnel they whistle and roar,

I don't want to go to the trenches no more.

I want to go over the sea,

Where the Allmand can't get at me.

Oh, my!

I'm too young to die!

I want to go home.

Military authority did not like that song and tried to suppress it. No success. So other words, considered "good for morale," were provided. We refused to sing them.

The following is from a letter written to me by an old man, a carpenter by trade, a native of the north of England. When his wife died, and his children were launched in the world, he became by choice, an itinerant worker. He spent his last years doing odd jobs, with great skill, lodging in peasant barns in a Welsh valley. There we were friends.

Dear Donald and Mrs. Attwater hoping to find you all well I've got a bad cold I've been helping Mrs. Jones to feather the fowls for Christmas I caught cold going to the big market. . . . Mrs. Evans Hill farm is dead & buried. John Williams the Old Farm above the Cliff got married to his servant 5 months ago & they have had a fine daughter. It is 3 weeks old on Christmas day so you see it didn't take long to make that, well look what a small little thing it is when you come to compare it with what God did, made all heaven and earth in 6 days. They are going to build a new memorial hall below the bridge underneath Forest farm just before you get to the Swan inn. . . .

I can imagine an American reading all this, and saying in effect, "Yes; very interesting. There is evidently in England a strong element of survival of past ways of thinking and believing and looking at things, and sometimes under stress of expressing oneself in dignified language. Here in the New World we move much faster, and things are very different."

They certainly are. But just read this.

O merciful Christ, most pitying and gentle Redeemer, to whom in the days of thy sacred life on earth the sick and suffering, lame and blind were brought and never went unhealed or uncomfited, consider I beseech thee this sickness which I bear unables me to perform my rightful duty.

Look compassionately on me, O Gentle King and Master and Saviour of all sinners, for if thou wilt thou canst make me well from death itself. Thou canst ordain life, Gracious Saviour I do pray thee to remove from me this burden and, above all, Gracious Saviour, I beseech thee to clean my soul so I may be worthy to be called thy son in righteousness.

Please hear me, Merciful Lord, so I may be one of thy faithful sons and I'll praise thee for ever and ever, Amen.

That prayer was written by a solitary light-keeper, who was taken ill while marooned at his post by bad weather. He was found dead in his lighthouse one day in November 1949. It was somewhere in Canada.

Two hundred and seventy-five years ago a tinker was thrown into Bedford jail. There he wrote a book. It is still read. It began, "As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down in that place to sleep; and, as I slept, I dreamed a dream." My point here is that he was a tinker.

DONALD ATTWATER.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Who Won the Elections?

THE story is that when they came to Marie Antoinette and complained, "Your Majesty, the people have no bread," she replied, "Let them eat cake." She may have said it with a smile, and strictly off the record, not meaning it seriously at all, not knowing that anyone would be cruel enough to quote her out of context.

The story is that several years ago when the price of meat was beginning to shoot up, a reporter asked Senator Taft what people could do about the high price of meat. The Senator replied, "Eat less meat." It is possible that he said it with a smile and arranged the words so that it would be taken as a witticism and not as a serious comment. Perhaps he put other words before and after it to indicate sympathy for people who wanted meat and could not afford it.

But he said it. During the recent campaign labor elements in Ohio seized upon this remark and made it even worse. They spread propaganda around to the effect that Taft had been asked what people should do about high prices and that he answered, "Eat less."

Taft was re-elected with a plurality of 430,000 over Jumping Joe Ferguson, polling 57% of the vote and winning most of the industrial cities of Ohio. Many of the commentators have seized upon this phenomenon as proving (1) that the Republicans won the election, (2) that people are fed up with political action by labor, or (3) that the good old days are back again.

★

LET us consider these statements. First, the Republicans did not win the election. They lost the election. This may be the only place where you have read this statement, but I assure you it is true. The big prize at stake was the control of the US Senate and House of Representatives. The Republicans failed to gain either.

The Republicans failed to gain control of the Senate and the House although they had almost everything in their favor. The Democrats have been in power now for 18 years and have had to take the blame for two hot wars and one cold war, one recession and two inflations, one Hiss and several Lattimores. Their leader, President Truman, is a man with admirable qualities, including a fighting heart and a willingness to recognize his mistakes, except perhaps General Vaughan.

But he is not an inspiring leader, nor even a man who can read a speech without sounding like a man who is reading a speech, and not very well at that. Thrust suddenly into the job of arranging the affairs of half the world, he has done well for one so poorly prepared, but he *was* poorly prepared.

And yet, with this man at their head the Democrats have stood off all Republican assaults in the last two

elections, one a presidential election, the other an off-year election. I believe that the Congressional elections of 1934 are the only off-year elections since the Civil War in which the Democrats have increased their strength. That year was the depth of the depression. Over 12 million men were roaming the streets, willing and able to work but unable to find any man to hire them.

The poor are not poor exclusively because of injustice. Some of them are morons and some are stupid and some are just not very bright. They have no stake in the status quo and many of them haven't the brains to figure out that they can change things by voting for a Senator and a Congressman. They will come out to vote for a President. But in the off-years they are too busy fighting an uneven battle against the immediate realities of life. They stay at home. In 1934 when 12 million of them had plenty of time to think, they went to the polls and knocked the ears off the GOP.

★

THE average Republican is a man who owns his own home, pays more taxes than his shiftless, rent-paying neighbor, and tends to identify his interests with the solid elements in the community who want no change unless it be a change back to the days before the change. The Republican has a stake in the status quo and he is usually brighter than the average Democrat. He has to be to make all that money. So he goes to the polls every time he has a chance and the result is that nine times out of ten the GOP increases its strength in an off-year election.

Even though the Republicans did lose the elections of 1950, it does not therefore follow that labor won them. This may be the only place where you will see this statement too, but the truth is that labor does not control the Democratic Party. In only one state, Michigan, have I seen any evidence that labor has gained a dominant influence in either state or big city machinery. The Democratic Party is a weird combination of Southern Tories, machine politicians, liberals and labor unions, in which the principal function and privilege of the unions is to supply the winning votes. The Democrats have controlled Congress frequently, but only for a few years in the panicky thirties could anyone claim that Congress was even 60% pro-labor in the bills that it enacted.

No matter what you may read elsewhere, labor is still on the outside looking in, both in Congress and the Democratic Party, still knocking at the door.

★

SECOND: People are fed up with political action by labor. This is wishful thinking of the worst kind. To begin with, people haven't had time to get fed up with it, that is, outside of the regular Republican who was fed up with it even before it had started. Political action by labor unions—in any kind of organized, efficient sense of the phrase—is still a baby.

The first election in which labor made any kind of splash was that of 1944. That was Sidney Hillman's big year. He was chairman of the CIO's Political Action Committee. At that time the AFL was still leery of the idea of doing anything practical toward implementing

its old slogan of "Reward your friends and punish your enemies."

At that time the Communists were still a strong and vocal minority in the CIO. Since the party line was then bending toward support of Roosevelt they did a lot to confuse and alienate people about and toward PAC, aided and abetted by the wild and woolly charges of such publications as the *Brooklyn Tablet*.

Since then the Communist unions have been thrown out of the CIO and the AFL has awakened to the realities of political life. We now have PAC and something called LLPE, Labor's League for Political Education, which is the AFL's name for its own awakening. Even before the top brass decided to sit down again with the CIO, Joe Keenan of the LLPE was working cheek by jowl with Jack Kroll of PAC, and the cooperation between AFL and CIO on the local level was even closer.

★

SO IN OHIO they came a cropper. Why? You can't beat somebody with nobody is one answer. Taft is somebody, whatever else he may be, and Jumping Joe Ferguson, from this distance, looks not only like nobody, but also a puddin'head. Still he won the primary and what could you do? Also I think people did resent the lies and exaggeration that labor elements indulged in to counter the lies and exaggeration of the Republicans. It is dangerous for Republicans to lie, but it is even more dangerous for Democrats and union men to lie because the Republicans control the newspapers and radio stations and what they can do to a lie by an opponent shouldn't happen to one of their own lies.

Third: The good old days are back again. Not on your life. The old days weren't good and they are not coming back short of a major disaster. The Democrats will lose elections when they make mistakes, just as the Republicans, back in the days between the Civil War and 1932, lost elections when they made mistakes. But the foreseeable future belongs to the Democrats because the foreseeable future belongs to labor and for the time being labor has thrown in its lot with the Democrats, plus of course an occasional Wayne Morse.

Labor is just learning the ropes on the ship of state. Give it a few more years.

The Democrats' big problem has always been to get out the vote. Labor has the key to that problem. When a key is new or you are using it in a lock that is unfamiliar to you, you often have trouble opening the door. Wait till labor gets used to the key and the lock. Then you will see something. What labor does when it opens the door is of course another question. New days are no better than old days by their nature. They could even be worse. But this much is sure: those who like to ride on bandwagons should get aboard now. For those who drive bandwagons have good memories and they will always reserve the best seats for those who were there when the bandwagon was not a bandwagon at all but just an old donkey-cart stuck in the mud. Don't say that nobody warned you.

JOHN C. CORT.

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The Stage

EDWINA BLACK

THE RELAPSE

RESTORATION comedy is infrequently produced, and that in itself should be enough to send anyone who is seriously interested in the theatre to the Guild's latest offering. It is also going to be a long time before another such period piece is so handsomely mounted. But in addition to these good things, Cyril Ritchard is so funny in the principal comedy role, and the direction, based on Anthony Quayle's London staging, is so lively and affectionate that the production does not have to be justified out of historical interest. The first act lags a bit, but the second gains momentum almost immediately and from there on in the humor is remarkably spontaneous.

The bawdry of Restoration comedy is sometimes misunderstood. The subject of the play is sex, the characters pursue nothing but sex, and there isn't a trace of sexuality anywhere in the play. Sex is a joke, *the* joke of this particular kind of comedy, and its essential humor lies in the almost abstracted intellectuality with which so unintellectual a subject is pursued. The appetite is taken for granted, and all the fun comes from the absurd nimbleness of the mind in a low cause, from the ingenuity of the chase.

This is sex without sensuality, admittedly an imaginary and artificial construction. But the human imagination is capable of such a construction, and of sustaining it long enough to make a joke. Two conditions are required for its success: the positing of a world as imaginary and artificial as the action which takes place in it; and the careful elimination of all emotion, since emotion would render the action lifelike and destroy the artifice. The elegance and affectation of Restoration manners provided a suitable world for this kind of comedy; and it was the individual playwright's problem to see that no trace of emotional involvement, no hint of the actual flesh, should intrude upon the invention. This was a narrow and difficult line to walk, and not many playwrights walked it successfully. The moment any sentiment crept into the play, or the passion became in any sense real, the action was immediately gross and distasteful. Restoration playwrights who let this happen brought Jeremy Collier down on their heads; and even those who avoided it had their problems. The extreme detachment and intellectuality which is necessary to sustain the form finally became an over-refinement, and what is often said to be the masterpiece of Restoration comedy, Congreve's "The Way of the World," proved altogether too rarefied and unhuman for success on the stage. Van Brugh's "Relapse" keeps its footing pretty well. Only a few moments with the Matchmaker seem to fall into really poor taste, and this of a kind not usually associated with the form. Grant the premises, and you are likely to have a very good time. (*At the Morosco.*)

I WAS lucky enough to get in on the last days of the stock companies, and one of my chief delights was the mystery plays. I suppose I must have seen "The Bat" at least thirteen times, "The Cat and the Canary" six or seven, and I did not miss "The Thirteenth Chair," "The Gorilla," "The Spider," "The Ghost Train" or many others that you would be able to name. Alas, we have all grown up. Our maturity has taken a rather odd form: we do not feel so much wiser or more confident, just unexpectedly tired. The best we seem able to do these days is to try to be persistently logical, and hope for the best. Unfortunately, our weary concern over cause and effect and for being sure that we have the facts is death to the mystery play. The mystery play, like practically any other form of drama which is any fun, requires a certain innocence of outlook. We must be able and willing to enter a world of fantasy, and abide by its purely arbitrary rules, for the thrills we can get out of it. The thrills may take an absurd form, viewed rationally: hands out of nowhere, moving fireplaces, daggers in the ceiling; but you do, or did, get the thrills. It was always something like getting on a roller-coaster, which was a matter of deliberately and not very sensibly leaving the ground in order to experience a purely manufactured excitement. The whole thing is a game, and the only indispensable condition is that you feel young enough to play it.

Nowadays our mystery plays are cautious, probable, and a shade scientific. Working on tiptoe, they seem almost terrified that they are going to frighten someone. Clues are examined with a patient reasonableness, and every effort is made to keep the process of discovery as slow and tedious as it must be in the police laboratories. The grand manner has disappeared, and the detective no longer makes sudden and startling deductions. He plods his way through the facts as all of us must in a bewildering and inflexible world, and while this latter-day attack makes the play considerably more lifelike, it also makes it a great deal less fun.

"Edwina Black" is the latest example of the meticulous and plodding thriller. The steps toward discovering the murderer's identity are taken gradually, almost haltingly, the atmosphere is one of realistic restraint, and when the time does come to turn off the lights, slam an upstairs door, and let a candle-lighted figure come down the staircase, the play is as embarrassed for this momentary nonsense as you are. It is the custom now to offer better characterization and more valid psychological reactions in place of the old thrills, and "Edwina Black" does this, too. But where sound psychology would grace a better play, in the case of the mystery piece it only serves to make the foolishly exciting moments seem twice as foolish by contrast. This kind of theatre could stand a good dose of John Dickson Carr, and perhaps a less self-conscious audience.

There is nothing much wrong with the production itself, despite the fact that no one has been willing to take directorial credit for it. Robert Harris may be a

shade too pale for the intensity that is asked of him, but Signe Hasso is extremely attractive and accomplished. She has the kind of dialogue in which she is constantly required to repeat the last two words of everybody else's lines, but she conceals the poverty of the part very well, and even finds new readings for some of the most hopeless clichés in the language. (*At the Booth.*)

STORY FOR A SUNDAY EVENING

IT IS ONE thing to be charmingly playful in the theatre, and quite another to be merely giddy about one's responsibilities to the audience. I am afraid that Paul Crabtree's venture into writing, directing, and acting in his own little experiment—it is not really an experiment in form, only in what one man can get away with—falls into the second category. Mr. Crabtree has not thought highly enough of his audience to provide it with a play. He has merely sketched in the feeble and wearying business of the young writer who tires of domesticity and succumbs easily to a woman who pampers his ego. He has not respected his own trade sufficiently to try for a fresh insight into this material, but has simply padded and interrupted it with asides to the audience and occasional entrances on the part of the stage manager. Presumably these pointless little forays give the piece the stature of an experiment, and this is Mr. Crabtree's final disservice to the theatre. Experimentation has a bad enough name as it is. Crabtree has encouraged the old resentment against it by using it as a mask for the inadequacies of his play rather than as an honest effort to find a better way of doing things. His one contribution to the season is his casting of Cloris Leachman in a leading role, and I imagine and hope that other managers will be after her right away. (*Closed November 25 at the Playhouse.*)

PRIDE'S CROSSING

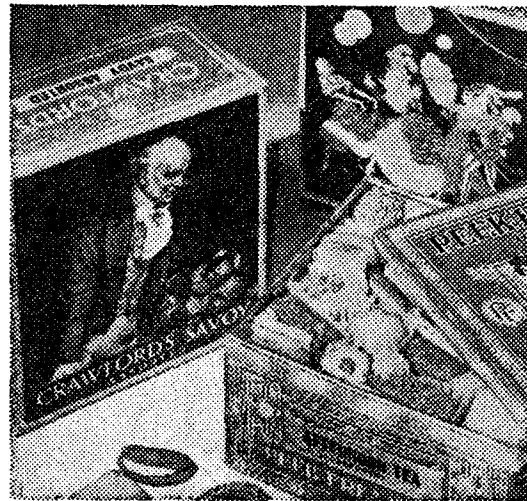
MOST bad plays are just bores. Victor Wolfson's new one has the distinction of being actively irritating. It is one of those relentlessly expository plays ("When she died—your young, lovely wife—etc.") which insists on cramming you to the gills with information without ever telling you what you really want to know. Right up to the next-to-last scene the characters were sitting down and unburdening themselves of their life histories, and you still couldn't quite make out which of them deserved your sympathy and which did not. When, along about ten-thirty, Tamara Geva sat calmly by and watched a young boy, strapped to an armchair and turned upside down, slowly strangle to death, I figured that she, at least, wasn't my girl. But by this time I hated them all. (*Closed November 25 at the Biltmore.*)

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The Screen

D for Death, V for Violence

HOLLYWOOD didn't indulge in cycles as much as usual during 1950. Perhaps having finished their discovery of psychology and having grown tired of hard-boiled detectives, the various studios went on their individual ways in providing entertainment on the nation's screens. The inquiry into racial problems, started in previous years, was continued with a few effective films about Negroes and Indians; and several movies concentrating on diseases and crippled heroes and heroines started a new trend and on this the studios are still watching box-office reactions for further development. But the strongest movement toward a real cycle is to be found in the large number of World War II films produced on expensive budgets and given the all-out impressive treatment.

Last year's successful "Task Force" and "Battleground" were quickly followed with this year's "Sands of Iwo Jima," "Three Came Home," "Twelve O'Clock High" and "When Willie Comes Marching Home." Recently "American Guerrilla in the Philippines" attempted to capture the realistic atmosphere of those other war movies, but somehow, in spite of its on-the-spot photography and tough fighting scenes, it got too involved in Technicolored romance between Tyrone Power and Micheline Prele. The newest item in Hollywood's endeavor to show what World War II was really like is "Breakthrough" which stands with the best of the group.

Like "Battleground," "Command Decision" and "Twelve O'Clock High," this new movie minces no words or pictures in saying that war is hell and that it is more than bravery on the part of men and officers. But one fact dawns on you as you watch the men in "Breakthrough" training in England, crossing the Channel on D-Day, taking the beaches and advancing across Normandy battle-by-battle—combat movies, no matter how good they are, fall into a pattern; after a while

even their realism becomes a standard cliché. In this case you have David Brian as the severe captain who doesn't want to get to know his men personally (because "when they die a piece of you dies"); John Agar as the young lieutenant, a former English teacher whose inexperience leads to mistakes and whose regard for his men makes him boil with rage against the captain's seemingly heartless lack of interest in personal tragedy; Frank Lovejoy as the experienced, hard, wise sergeant who helps the young lieutenant over the rough spots and succeeds in making a man of him. And you have the other cliché types: the muscles guy, the scared boy who wears glasses, the older man who fathers the youngsters, the wise-cracker who's going in for politics.

If "Breakthrough" had come out first, then no doubt "Battleground" and "Twelve O'Clock High" would seem like the cliché-ridden runners-up. The fact that officers in earlier pictures cracked under the strain of making too many decisions doesn't make David Brian's collapse any less forceful. Nor do the horrors of battle and death in "Battleground" detract from Director Lewis Seiler's effectively staged hedgerow-by-hedgerow fighting scenes in "Breakthrough." Perhaps what you'll remember most about this new war film are the snatches of conversation from its good script which establish the character of these infantrymen and the remarkable shots of their faces as they advance into battle. And to the statement at the finale made by the smart sergeant (excellently played by Lovejoy): "I'd sure hate to have to go through it again," let us say amen.

★

COMPARED WITH a thoughtful movie like "Breakthrough," other new dramas this week seem like pretty thin stuff. Perhaps "Right Cross" would be thin in any line-up. Its script tries to get serious at times and say some interesting things about the hard lot of prizefighters, especially those with class-conscious inferiority complexes; but its characters are so confused that it's almost impossible to consider them seriously. These confused people include a champ (Ricardo Montalban) who's oversensitive about his Mexican background, the girl (June Allyson) who loves him and has to prove she wants him for himself and not his title, their friend (Dick Powell) who loves the girl and deserves the sock in the jaw the fighter gives him. All in all, there's much too much foolish talk and not enough good fighting in this movie.

★

"DIAL 1119" is a timely movie in these days when former service men are going berserk and shooting up people in groups of four or five; but whether its story deserves telling I'm not sure. An insane killer corners six people in a bar; will he kill them before the police come to the rescue?

Director Gerald Mayer handles this grim subject with a maximum of suspense and a minimum of explanation. As the psychopath, Marshall Thompson holds you as breathlessly tense as he holds the victims at bay. When

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it's all over and you are limp from prolonged tension, you may wonder as I did: Just what is "Dial 1119" other than an exercise to prove that movies are sometimes a powerful medium that can work you into a meaningless lather?

★

"*WOMAN ON THE RUN*" will also keep you in a breathless state as Ann Sheridan, with Dennis O'Keefe, pursues her husband (Ross Elliott) who witnessed a murder. The husband is running because he doesn't want to testify; the wife is chasing him because, although they were on the verge of a separation, she has just learned he is a cardiac case and needs medicine. It would be unfair to tell you any more of this plot which, in spite of its many loopholes and trick solution, is the starting point for some terrifically exciting cinema. Director Norman Foster, who collaborated on the script with Alan Campbell, knows how to make you jump right out of your seat. The use to which he puts a roller coaster in the film's big climax will probably make you jump right out of the theater.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Of Note

DEFINITION OF THE ASSUMPTION

THE English *Tablet* (128 Sloane Street, London, S.W. 1) recently devoted almost an entire issue to the dogma of the Assumption. Here is an excerpt from the lead editorial:

Those who say now that the definition of the Assumption is not opportune mean, in short, that it would be perfectly all right if it had been defined a long time ago, but in the middle of the twentieth century it is not appropriate. And the implication all the time is that the more remote the definition of a dogma is, the less real need be the acceptance of it. It is, we may think, partly because this is so that the present definition is made. It is because there would be vastly more objection to the opportuneness of defining, or re-stating, any of the more important articles of our Faith. It is because it would be regarded as wholly unsuitable to tell the twentieth century what the Lateran Councils told the twelfth, or what Trent told the sixteenth. The farther back in history dogmatic clarifications may go, the more acceptable they become, until the position is reached of those who devote all their attention to the early Church, as though those first centuries were in some way more immune from error than our own.

It is a peculiar parochialism, attributing a law of diminishing returns to the Holy Ghost, that will find a special character in its own generation, as less likely to have the guidance and protection of the Holy Ghost than the generations that have gone before, and consequently more reason to respect the sensitivities of the leaders of contemporary intellectual fashion.

There is a sort of diffidence which makes some Catholics always anxious to deck out the Church in the trappings of the time, and to present her doctrines in the language of current idiom, hoping, perhaps, that the Majesty of God and the glory of His Mother can be discreetly concealed, that no susceptibilities may be offended. It is the temptation of St. Peter before the cock crowed; and it was against this temptation that the Encyclical *Humani Generis* was written.

It is for the same purpose, it may be thought, that the dogma of the Assumption is now proclaimed; not because it was any less true before or will be any more true now, but to shock and shame this generation, if the words may be used, into a reconsideration of the nature of the Faith which the Church holds, as the crowing of the cock shocked and shamed St. Peter; to shock those who may all their lives have professed dogmas equally resting on revelation but so long familiar as to be little more than half-accepted in a world on which unbelief presses heavily.

"But we Christians," writes Mauriac in Tuesday's *Figaro*, "do we really believe in eternal life? The dogma of the Assumption, so disconcerting for many minds—and, I confess it, for myself—which the Holy Father is going to define on the Feast of All Saints, draws our attention to that article of the Creed, the most mysterious, the most incredible, which is so rarely discussed by the Church and which represents an insane, a marvelous hope—the resurrection of the flesh. . . ."

It was fitting that this war-scarred generation should be taught, in the words of the recent Fulda Pastoral of the German Bishops, "that death is not to be the end of our earthly existence; that, on the contrary, death is 'the wages of sin,' the unceasing sorrow of nature over the tremendous human guilt, a warning of sin not to be missed until the *vita venturi saeculi* which we confess in the Creed, the life of a coming new state of the world."

There are so many reasons why the definition is fitting, to remind this generation of the very nature of the Catholic Faith, and of the God-given authority which guards the God-given revelation, whereby alone the end of man may be attained: and above all it was fitting that a doctrine that was, from all tradition, so eminently definable, should be proclaimed in a generation which has learned to look in a special manner for the intercession of the Mother of God: *Assumpta est Maria in caelum; gaudet exercitus angelorum*.

We Genteel Assassins

By LEO J. TRESE

WE AMERICANS are so sure of ourselves, so sure that our way of life is *the* way of life. We wave our Four Freedoms on high, and are disappointed and impatient when our Asiatic and European brothers fail to throw themselves in ecstasy at our feet. Certainly in the world as it is constituted today, I know of no other country in which I should prefer to live, no other government which could command my loyalty. Yet, because something is for me the best here and now, it does not entitle me to argue that it is therefore the best for everyone and for always. To maintain that the ideal of democracy has reached its full and perfect fruition in the American form, is to fall into a chauvinism that borders on intellectual sterility.

It is a smart salesman who knows the defects of his own product. It probably is true that there is proportionately less penury in the United States than in any other land today—and the highest average income in the world. Yes it is of small comfort to the millions of marginal subsistents to know that their position at the bottom of the statistical table is nicely balanced by the big incomes at the top. We have freedom from fear—from some kinds of fear. Yet there are other types of fear besides that of the concentration camp, as is witnessed by our booming incidence rate of emotional and mental disorders, by the deep-etched lines of worry to be seen in such profusion on any bus or street-car. We have freedom of speech and freedom of religion, but both depend for the area of their extent upon the day-to-day opinion of five men out of nine.

What is democracy, anyway? "Government by the people, for the people" is glibly mouthed. But who *are* the people? If they are not an organized and powerful minority governing for the benefit of the few (as they can be), then are they the majority of the people governing for the many, but not for all? If this is so, it matters little to the minority member that his enforced conformity to a pattern is the will of many; to him, the dictatorship may be as real as a one-man tyranny. Or is democracy, our democracy, government by *all* the people *for* all the people? Then what is the absolute norm of values which contains and guides the plebeian will—what is the Good, the Ideal, common to all and changeable by none, which stands above constitutions (which can be amended) and supreme courts (which can reverse themselves)?

This chain of thought and self-questioning in which I find myself, has its origin in three apparently unrelated incidents of recent occurrence. One was a casual

encounter with a young Japanese of American birth and parentage. Over a cup of coffee he told me of his family's ruin and his father's suicide, which resulted from the euphemistically titled "relocation" of coastal Japanese at the beginning of the last war. It was an example of the tyranny and injustice of which even our democracy is capable, under the twin spurs of mass hysteria and cold-blooded economic jealousy. It is a chapter of our history which we would gladly forget.

Another in the trio of events was my meeting with a group of German college students, touring America under the government-sponsored exchange program. The students were reluctant to discuss America with an American on anything but a superficial level. But I was not interested in their reaction to the number of automobiles or the height of our buildings. Under persistent prodding they admitted that in their private thoughts they did find something to criticize in the American scene: it was the way everyone talked about democracy without seeming to have any insight as to what it really was; using the word "democracy" as a slogan, much after the fashion of the Russians, and finding comfort and security in the word, without any real examination or understanding of its content. My young friends didn't maintain that Germans were any more perceptive than we in their talk of democracy; it was just that our visitors had expected more, and had been disappointed.

★

THE third occurrence, which tied these incidents together, was the reading of a book: *The Twenty-Fifth Hour* (C. Virgil Gheorghiu. Knopf. \$3.50). Translated from the Rumanian, the novel is actually a thinly disguised autobiography; the autobiography of a man innocently caught and crushed between the millstones of Eastern and Western ideologies. Except that Mr. Gheorghiu does not acknowledge such an opposition of ideologies. To him, Communism is simply the uninhibited offspring of a Western Technocracy which is speciously labeled Democracy.

"Russia [the author is speaking through the fictional counterpart of his wife] since the Communist Revolution, has become the most advanced branch of Western Technological Civilization. It has taken up all the theories of the West and has put them into practice. It has reduced man to zero, in accordance with the doctrine of the West. It has transformed society into one vast machine, in accordance with the doctrine of the West. Russia has imitated the West as only a barbarian or a savage could have done. The only genuinely Russian contribution to Communist society is its barbaric fanaticism: *nothing* else. Apart from bloodthirstiness and fanaticism, every single thing in the USSR comes from the West.

"And now you are at war with this particular aspect of Western civilization—its Communist aspect." (*The Twenty-fifth Hour* closes with World War III.) "That is why your Third World War is simply a revolution that has broken out and is following its course within the limits of the Technological Civilization of the West.

REV. LEO J. TRESE is the author of *Vessel of Clay*.

The Transatlantic and European aspect of Western civilization is fighting the Western Communist aspect. It is a sort of internecine struggle between two categories, two classes of the same society. . . . No one outside Western civilization has any part to play in it. . . . It is not being fought in the interests of men. Western civilization knows no men. . . . They have to behave according to technical laws, like machines. Man has been reduced to a single plane—the social plane. He has been transformed into a 'citizen' which no longer has anything in common with the conception of a human being. . . . The present struggle is a clash between two categories of robots, each dragging in its wake a trail of slaves of flesh and blood."

★

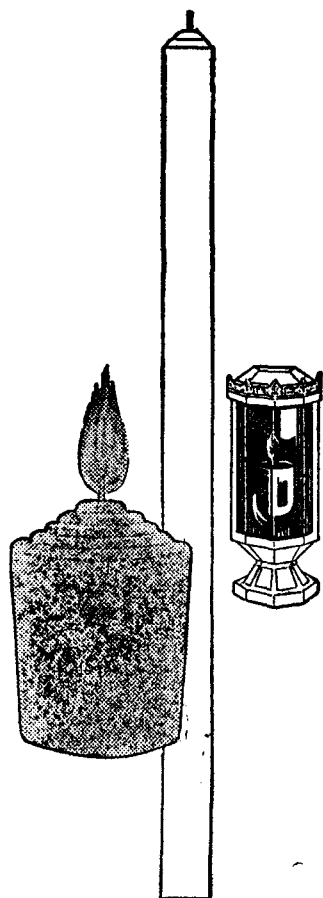
A MAN who has suffered, as Mr. Gheorghiu has, alike from the bestiality of the Communists, the inhumanity of the Nazis, and the coldly legal efficiency of the Americans, may be forgiven for taking a very dim view of the present and the future. He may surely be permitted to feel that humanity has reached its Twenty-fifth Hour, "the hour when mankind is beyond salvation, when it is too late even for the coming of the Messiah."

Simply as a tract, as "the Gospel according to Gheorghiu," *The Twenty-fifth Hour's* four hundred and four pages would be much too many. But it is far more than a tract. Aside from its plenteous philosophizing, (which is all to the good if it will generate thought) the book is an absorbing novel of war's backwash, told as only

a man could tell it who has slept in his own urine and lived on five hundred calories a day. In Johann Moritz, the bewildered little man caught in the big war, the author has limned a particularly unforgettable character: Johann, who has been through Hell and sees nothing but more Hell ahead, trying to smile obediently for the American Press Relations officer.

But even more than its value as a novel, the book is notable as an awakener from the complacent supposition that our European brothers have stars in their eyes every time they gaze westward across the Atlantic. Given any choice, they would quote Shakespeare with Roosevelt, and cry, "A plague on both your houses." The close and known brutality of the Communists has driven Western Europeans in desperation into our arms, but they have not ceased to tremble there. They still are not too sure that ultimately they may not be devoured. The fact that their absorption or dissolution will be accomplished more genteelly—with linen and finger-bowls, so to speak—does not wholly quiet their misgivings.

The truth is that in the final analysis we haven't a thing to offer Western Europe that the Communists can't offer—a roof, a job, and food. Such intangibles as free speech and secret vote are for the intellectuals to worry about; such tangibles as wealth and free-enterprise are for fortune's darlings to crave. But for the common man, we haven't a thing to give that the Communists can't give—except one thing: God. And with God, an immutable moral law.



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Books

THESE two books complete each other. The former is Gill's word-picture of the role of art in society. The latter is an album of line-engravings, sprung not only from Gill's hand, but equally from the imponderables of his philosophy.

In Gill's blue-print of the universe, art is far from being an after-thought. Rather it is a major cog, inextricably dependent and depended upon, without which society would cease to function, even at its present machine-set stage of mass produced objects, or should we say merchandise. Gill hardly sees eye to eye with bankers and with Marx who assume a quasi-theological role for money as man's prime mover.

Gill sees the modern world as esthetically horrid and morally reprehensible, shaped as it is—or rather,

forcefully misshaped—on racks set up by industry and commerce. In contrast, Gill's golden age is the medieval, where communal work was the norm, when "artist" and "artisan" meant the same thing, and anonymity of the art work was the rule. Gill's treatment of the Middle Ages compounds in a polychrome panorama history and benign myth, as we see dairymaids milking unicorns in some of the gothic *millefleurs*. Naturally enough, when set against such a background, the lords of today, engrossed in buying and selling, are seen at a disadvantage.

THE second book, 25 *Nudes*, carries us from Gill's world of words into Gill's world of forms, and it is tempting for another artist, more familiar with forms than with words, to set these engravings as the proof of the pudding, that is, to test the validity of Gill's thoughts by the kind of art that Gill makes. There is a simplicity and purity wholly admirable in these white-line drawings set on black, so consistent with the logic of the medium.

There is also—as is always the case when I look at Gill's art—the unease of attempting to reconcile his catholicity of thought with the pride of craft, hardly healthier than moral pride. The elegant shorthand with which Gill 'writes' organic forms in these drawings, though consistent with his tools and his materials, at times carries over into the merely decorative.

In the woodcuts of other English masters, Bewick or Blake, it is not so much, as is the case with Gill, the razor sharpness of the burin or of the blade with which we are confronted, but rather the pressure, action and torsion of fingers, wrist, and arm, with results admirable, and yet only rarely wholly successful, with a margin of hesitation and error that is clearly human.

In contrast, Gill's line remains so pure as to be dehumanized. Later generations may read in the style of

his autography how difficult it is to escape from one's own age, and how the cut of the machine that the artist disavowed in words permeates nevertheless his drawings, free from error and passion as are mechanical renderings. Thus Gill became, *à contre-cœur*, a man of his time, and incidentally escaped the fate of the men of Beuron, or of the German Nazarenes, who managed only too successfully to produce art in the vacuum of a wish-dream.

Paradoxically, these two books that are paeans, set in words and lines, to the virtues of craftsmanship, fall somewhat below standard where the craft of bookmaking is concerned. The proofreading of *Art* should have been more exacting; for example, Maratain, for Maritain, comes as a shock. Two of the plates of *Nudes* are set head side down, if we are to go by the way in which Gill himself signed them.

JEAN CHARLOT.

China and the Soviet Union: A Study of Sino-Soviet Relations. Aitchen K. Wu. John Day. \$6.

THE recent advances of Russia in Asia have evoked a number of books designed to explain to the English-speaking public how and why these successes have been won. Notwithstanding the substantial merits of several of these works, the authors have tended to treat their subject from a Western viewpoint and have drawn almost exclusively on Russian and other Western source materials. A need exists for new books which present the opinions of informed Asiatics on matters which, after all, affect them and their countrymen above all others.

In the case of China this need has been partly met by the work of Aitchen K. Wu, a distinguished and politically independent Chinese with extensive academic and diplomatic experience in America, Europe, and the Soviet Far East. His object in writing his book was to make some "slight contribution to world history in the making, . . . [and] to foster better relations in the Far East." To

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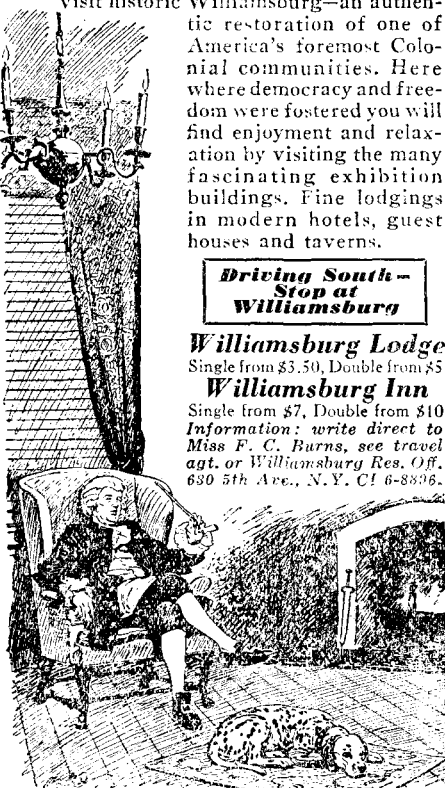
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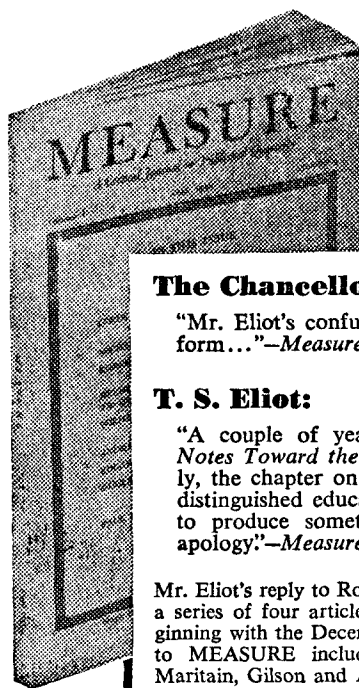
accomplish this aim he narrates in considerable detail the history of Russian relations with China from the 17th century to the present day; his emphasis is diplomatic, his judgments scrupulously fair, and his statements generally accurate. Two-thirds of the book is devoted to the period since the Russian Revolution of 1917. At the end Mr. Wu has appended the texts of a number of important documents bearing on Sino-Soviet relations. He has made some use of Chinese, as well as Western, sources. That fact, and his firsthand observations on certain events, constitute the book's greatest merit.

UNFORTUNATELY, Mr. Wu's diplomatic training has beguiled him into ignoring certain important topics related to the subject of his book. He has little or nothing to say of the nature of Russia's fundamental interests in the Far East, the significance of industrialization in Siberia and Manchuria, the implications of Lenin's theory of imperialism as the last stage of capitalism, the psychological impact of Soviet ideology and propaganda on the backward and oppressed peoples of Asia, the various shifts of the international Communist "line" on the Far East, or the basic reasons for the successes of the Chinese Communists. Furthermore, his understandable desire for good relations between the Soviet Union and China has betrayed him into a mood of excessive optimism with respect to the present and future. He rejects out of hand the widely held opinion that the Sino-Soviet treaty of February 14, 1950, contained secret clauses providing for the sending of a force of Chinese laborers to the Soviet Union; for the admission of Russian advisers into the Chinese bureaucracy, army, and police; and for the use of certain Chinese ports by the Soviet Union in case of a general war. He believes that relations between China and the Soviet Union, and between the latter and the United States, can and should be entirely peaceful and friendly. The main responsibility for making further efforts to end the cold war he assigns to the United States.

In addition to these dubious interpretations, which reflect the opinions of most Far Eastern intellectuals, Mr. Wu's book displays some technical defects. His bibliography omits certain important references, and his transcriptions of Chinese and Rus-

sian personal names are often inaccurate and inconsistent.

Nevertheless, *China and the Soviet Union* is a serious and generally accurate treatment of an important subject. Despite its questionable conclusions, it deserves the consideration



The Chancellor:

"Mr. Eliot's confusion appears in highly concentrated form..."—*Measure*, January, 1950

T. S. Eliot:

"A couple of years ago I produced a book called *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture*. Unfortunately, the chapter on education caught the eye of a very distinguished educator, who, in effect, called upon me to produce something more coherent or make my apology!"—*Measure*, December, 1950

Mr. Eliot's reply to Robert M. Hutchins' charge will appear in a series of four articles called "The Aims of Education," beginning with the December issue of *MEASURE*. Contributors to *MEASURE* include such writers as Hutchins, Nehru, Maritain, Gilson and Andres—discussing law, politics, science, philosophy and art. **SUBSCRIBE NOW AND SAVE AS MUCH AS \$2.50.** *Special Christmas rate:* \$3.00 for one year, \$5.50 for two years or two subscriptions. Send your subscription and remittance to the Henry Regnery Company, 20 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago 4, Ill. *today*. Gift subscriptions will be delivered before Christmas if you act now. A flattering gift.

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of Americans who wish to understand Russia's successes in Asia and the sentiments which they have aroused among the Asiatics themselves.

HAROLD C. HINTON.

The Vatican and the Kremlin. Camille M. Cianfarra. Dutton. \$3.

THIS book by a New York Times correspondent at the Vatican answers a widespread need for information. Whether our politicians like or dislike the Catholic Church, it is evident that the Church of Peter is their most valuable ally in the defense of Occidental civilization against the menacing expansion of Bolshevism. This new book is not as carefully prepared as was Cianfarra's *The Vatican and the War*, published six years ago. It is a loosely connected collection of essays dealing with the persecution of Catholic priests and the counter-measures of the Church in the various countries behind the Iron Curtain and the defeat of Communism in Italy. This presentation is often based on a wealth of documentation, especially from persecuted Catholics and from Bolshevik pamphlets.

The author includes in his picture the happenings within the Orthodox churches, especially the Moscow-led Pan-Orthodox Movement that has created something like a religious Cominform. Mr. Cianfarra deals also with the persecution of Protestantism in Bulgaria and stresses the fact that the number of Protestants in Eastern Europe is relatively small and this is the main reason why the persecution of non-Catholics has lacked the dramatic quality of the war waged against the Roman Church.

A most interesting story is the report on the anti-religious policy in little Albania which is only ten percent Catholic, but where the Catholic clergy has a much deeper influence upon the forming of the popular mind than Mohammedan and Orthodox priests. The violent anti-Catholic campaign of Mr. Hoxha, the Russian puppet, has been of incredible

brutality. In northern Albania, Catholicism had founded monasteries, schools, hospitals, children's homes and other social institutions; already in 1945 they were closed and their functionaries thrown into jail, except for the Italian-born clergy, who were expelled. Two prominent priests were executed because of an alleged "Fascist" plot. In May, 1950, the Albanian clergy had been reduced to one seventy-five-year old bishop, two parish priests and one Franciscan friar. Of the two archbishops, one died in jail in May, 1946, and the other was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment. Two of the five bishops were executed in 1948. Albania is a country neglected by the press and it is therefore to be welcomed that these facts are presented to a wider audience.

Cianfarra lets the facts speak for themselves and confines his personal opinions to a minimum. But it is evident from his representation that he does not see any end of the present conflict, that the antagonism between the Vatican and the Kremlin seems insolvable as long as the anti-religious movement remains an integral part of Communism. That this is so, is not only proven by the actions of the Kremlin, but also by many characteristic Soviet documents with which the author supports his story. The book is therefore useful reading for those naive contemporaries who still believe that you can do business with Stalin.

MAX FISCHER.

The Salt and the Savor. Howard W. Troyer. A. A. Wyn. \$3.

EDWARD WAGENKNECHT of the literary scholars observes that "nobody knows just what a novel is, and nobody knows just where the novel begins" So be it. Mr. Troyer's book takes its place in some odd category headed by an interrogation point. For all the random merits of *The Salt and the Savor*, the book occasions much head-scratching as to the technical accuracy of calling it a novel—which inevitably begets questioning as to the ethical precision

of that classification. One expects a novel to have some sort of subject, predicate, and object.

This book is a collection of twenty-five pioneer tales (called chapters) based on historical events in nineteenth century Indiana, from the founding of townships to the Civil War, and including the rise and fall of a Fourier association. The tales are strung together by the recurrence of certain characters and places. Any chapter in the book could stand, without alteration, as an independent tale, as, the author acknowledges, some of them have.

Incidents are treated in the Jesse Stuart manner, romanticizing chaw-spitting realism in an effort to make certain that it is real. That penchant is exemplified in the too-heavy strokes of pot-bellied-stove vernacular (too many words and phrases have no meaning in the language, only in the context), and in the overweight of quaint names.

Perhaps ten of the twenty-five tales are fully worth the ten minutes each requires—if the reader doesn't require too much depth. They are mostly circumscribed by instinct and motion, though there is a measure of thinking here and there. The book has its moments of verve, of humor, of pathos, and, indeed, of bathos.

LEGARDE S. DOUGHTY.

• REVIEWERS •

JEAN CHARLOT is now at the University of Hawaii. His paintings are included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art and the Phillips Gallery. He is the author of *Art-Making from Mexico to China*.

HAROLD C. HINTON teaches Far Eastern history at the graduate school of Georgetown University.

MAX FISCHER teaches the history of medieval civilization at the New School for Social Research.

LEGARDE S. DOUGHTY is a short-story writer and essayist whose home is in Augusta, Georgia.

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